

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4482
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
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TAGS: PFOR, EAID, BE, CG, US
SUBJECT: BELGIAN FINANCE MINISTRY VIEWS ON THE MOBUTU PLAN

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 0965; (B) BRUSSELS 0881;
(C) 77 BRUSSELS 9400

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1. IN CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER JANUARY 24,
JACQUES VAN YPERSELE (INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR/MINISTRY
OF FINANCE) ADDED SOME ADDITIONAL DETAIL TO THAT REPORTED
REFTELS ON PROGRESS IN THE BELGIAN COORDINATING EFFORT
ON ZAIRE.

2. UNDER MINISTRY OF FINANCE PRESSURE, ACCORDING TO

VAN YPERSELE, THE GOB HAS DRAWN BACK FROM WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN AN DANGEROUSLY EXPOSED POSITION VIS A VIS MOBUTU. SPECIFICALLY, IT IS NOW AGREED THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, THAT AN IMF STABILIZATION AGREEMENT WITH ZAIRE IS A PREREQUISITE TO ANY INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO ORGANIZE ZAIRIAN RECOVERY. LIKewise, THE MALDAGUE OPERATION - WHICH MOBUTU ORIGINALLY PROPOSED TO DRAFT A LIST OF NEW ZAIRIAN AID REQUIREMENTS - HAS EVOLVED INTO A POLICY-ORIENTED GOB TASK FORCE FOCUSED RATHER ON PREPARING THE GROUND FOR BELGIAN-IMF-OTHER DONOR COOPERATION.

3. VAN YPERSELE SAID THAT THE OVERALL GOB COORDINATOR ON THE MOBUTU PLAN IS DEVELOPMENT MINISTER OUTERS. OUTERS PROPOSED TO FINANCE MINISTER GEENS IN EARLY JANUARY THAT THE TWO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH TO DISCUSS ZAIRE STABILIZATION WITH THE IMF/IBRD. GEENS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE, BUT SUGGESTED THEY RESERVE A FINAL DECISION PENDING THE RESULTS IN EARLY FEBRUARY OF (A) THE PRELIMINARY IMF TEAM VISIT TO KINSHASA; (B) THE MOBUTU VISIT TO BRUSSELS. IF THE GOZ IS MORE FORTHCOMING WITH THE IMF THAN IT HAS BEEN AND IF NO OTHER SPANNERS FALL INTO THE WORKS, VAN YPERSELE SAID, THE TWO BELGIAN MINISTERS WILL TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON IN MID-FEBRUARY. OUTERS IS LIKELY TO STAY SEVERAL DAYS FOR OTHER BUSINESS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSSIBLY INCLUDING TALKS WITH USAID, BUT GEENS WOULD ONLY BE CONCERNED WITH ZAIRE AND WOULD NOT STAY IN THE U.S. OVER A DAY OR TWO.

4. VAN YPERSELE REVIEWED THE BASIC BELGIAN CONDITIONS, AS STATED BRUSSELS 965, TO ASSUMING THE ROLE OF COORDINATOR. HE STRESSED THAT THE FINANCE MINISTRY PLACES PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE ON PLACEMENT OF AN IMF OFFICER AS A DIRECTOR IN THE ZAIRE CENTRAL BANK. IN GENERAL, BELGIUM WOULD LIKE TO SEE ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IMF ON ZAIRE PARALLEL THAT THE DUTCH HAVE HAD FOR YEARS ON INDONESIA.

5. IN TERMS OF INTERNAL GOB WORK ON THE ISSUE, VAN YPERSELE BELIEVES THAT THE MALDAGUE GROUP IS PERFORMING WELL IN BLENDING THE OFTEN DIVERGENT VIEWS OF DIFFERENT BELGIAN MINISTRIES. HE SAID HE HAD ASSIGNED A DEPUTY TO IT AT FIRST, BUT HAS LATELY BEGUN TO TAKE A GREATER INTEREST AND ATTEND MEETINGS HIMSELF AS THE FINANCE REPRESENTATIVE. VAN YPERSELE GAVE MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THE GROUP'S UPGRADING TO MALDAGUE HIMSELF WHO, HE SAID, HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AT PROMOTING

INTER-AGENCY AGREEMENT ON THIS ISSUE, A DIFFICULT AND
TOUCHY ONE FOR THE CURRENT COALITION. OLSEN

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